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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO RUEHNZ/AMCONSUL AUCKLAND 1424

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 4906

RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY 0558

RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE 0101

RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH 0020

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0346

RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 0665

RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA 0609

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0258

RUEHAP/AMEMBASSY APIA 0372

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0639

RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 0058

RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0179

RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE 0499

RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 0533

RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0083

RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4540

RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI

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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 WELLINGTON 000568

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SENSITIVE

STATE FOR D (FRITZ), EAP/FO, AND EAP/ANP

NSC FOR VICTOR CHA

SECDEF FOR OSD/ISD LIZ PHU

PACOM FOR J01E/J2/J233/J5/SJFHQ

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [NZ](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN REGIONAL SECURITY REMARKS GET NO REACTION FROM
GNZ

REF: A. CANBERRA 1021B. CANBERRA 1020

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The July 5 Australian White Paper on
and expressions of willingness by both Australian Prime Minister
John Howard and Australia's Labor Party leader Kevin Rudd to deploy
the military to help stabilize the Pacific region has not yet
received an official reaction from the New Zealand Government.
However, these Australian comments underscore fundamental
differences in the defense strategies of New Zealand and Australia
in the Pacific.

New Zealand regional security experts have told post that the
instability in the immediate Pacific region helps
forge a complementary relationship between Australia and
NZ that actually has benefits for the greater region and thus ensure
its prolonged existence. They cautioned, however, that the very
challenges to bring the two countries together in a uniform strategy
of regional stability will not be easily resolved. End Summary

BACKGROUND: Australia's DOD 2207 Defense Update

¶3. (SBU) Australian Prime Minister John Howard has used
the July 5 release of the Australian Department of Defense's 2007
Defense Update to speak publicly about Australia's strategic future
and implications for its national security policy (see ref A).
Howard stated that the prospect of failed states, terrorism,
transnational crime, and mass migration of refugees in Australia's
Pacific neighborhood all represented a substantial threat to his
country's national security. Howard further noted that such crises
in the region would require that his government continue to employ
its actively
interventionist policy of using both Australia's soft power, in the

form of aid programs and humanitarian relief, and its hard power, in the form of direct military intervention, to address regional instability.

¶14. (SBU) In outlining the opposition party's regional security policies (ref B), Australian Labor Party leader Kevin Rudd offered a similar assessment regarding the threats facing Australia. Like Howard, Rudd also vowed to commit Australia military resources to intervene in the Pacific region if elected Prime Minister. Rudd, however, gave greater weight to employing Australia's soft power to stabilize and secure the region. Rudd supports regional aid programs and humanitarian relief, but wants to go further than Howard on soft power. Rudd advocates a greater hands-on "winning-the-hearts-and-minds" approach where Australia directly intervenes at a community level in affected Pacific states to help alleviate shortfalls in such areas as education, healthcare and economic development.

No official reaction from GNZ as yet

¶15. (SBU) The GNZ has not yet publicly reacted to either Howard's or Rudd's statements, or even the Australian Department of Defense's 2007 Defense Update. According to a New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade official there is no plan to do so in the near term. Even in a speech by Minister of Defence Phil Goff to the New Zealand Defence Force Command and Staff College, delivered a week after the release of the White Paper, no reference was made to either the Howard or Rudd statements or to Australia's regional security policy.

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Post has been told off the record that the lack of an official response or comment from GNZ should not be construed as opposition to views espoused.

NZ-Australia divergent in method, convergent in principle

¶16. (SBU) Howard's statement about Australia's strategic future did, however, underline the clear differences in the defense outlooks of New Zealand and Australia in the Pacific. Whereas Australia prefers a stronger military component to missions in the region, New Zealand traditionally gives more emphasis to the police and civilian-led components of these endeavors.

¶17. (SBU) In many cases, the disparity in New Zealand and Australian defense methodologies is shaped by availability of resources. Although NZ's defense resources have increased over time, it is limited compared to that of Australia's. New Zealand's defence and foreign policies also reflect the views of the Government of the day. The centre-left Labour-led Government firmly believes in multilateralism and multiculturalism. Since coming to power in 1999, it has worked to re-configure the NZ Defence Force (NZDF) to take advantage of what its regards are innate NZDF strengths - its multicultural nature (many in the NZ armed services are of Maori origin and Maori culture of deeply interwoven in NZ military life) and good pre-deployment training. These traits particularly predispose the NZDF to being sensitive towards local Pacific populations and winning their trust and support. Thus, in the eyes of the GNZ, New Zealand is particularly well-suited to support peacekeeping operations. The GNZ believes that by better focusing on what the NZDF can do well, it can achieve results.

¶17. (SBU) Post sought the opinion of two prominent New Zealand regional security experts, Peter Cozens and Dr. Lance Beath, in order to better determine a New Zealand reaction to the Howard and Rudd statements. Both analysts said they were not surprised by the content of both statements. They noted that the statements served to underline that, although the respective approaches of Australia and New Zealand may appear to differ greatly, Canberra's ultimate goal of stabilizing the South Pacific also mirrors Wellington's.

18. (SBU) Despite not pursuing identical paths in force structure, development and defense/security philosophy, Beath, a former New Zealand Ministry of Defence official and diplomat and now an academic at Victoria University of Wellington, told Post that there still can be effective cooperation despite the divergence in strategy. Despite the differences in the two countries' means, Beath believes that the New Zealand-Australia strategic defense relationship is a sound co-habitation and that the two governments will continue to proceed in unison to address the vital strategic problems in their Pacific neighborhood.

19. (SBU) As evidence of desiring similar outcomes, Beath noted that, given Australian concerns about what some of its political leaders and leading analysts have called the 'arc of instability' in it's Pacific neighborhood, New Zealand's small, balanced Defense Force can be especially useful as a complement to Australia's richer military resources.

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10. (SBU) Cozens, Director of the Centre of Strategic Studies, a Wellington-based think-tank that focuses on New Zealand's strategic security environment, believes that the strategic partnership has come into its own in the last decade, as Wellington and Canberra have responded jointly to Pacific security challenges. He believes that the seemingly constant stream of security challenges occurring in the closer region will place a premium on cooperation. These challenges, whilst disadvantageous for a number of Pacific countries, are conversely helpful for superior New Zealand-Australia strategic cooperation, conspiring to strengthen rather than harm the New Zealand-Australia strategic partnership.

11. (SBU) With security challenges in the region continuing to fester and new ones appearing in a seemingly regular basis, both experts agree that it would be imprudent to assume the challenges which drive this elevated Trans-Tasman strategic working relationship will not easily be resolved.

Keegan